

Abstract

The invention recites an apparatus and method that includes a first conveyor adapted to convey a first stream of products and a gapper positioned adjacent the first conveyor to receive the first stream. The gapper reorients the first stream into a vertical queue of products. The apparatus and method also includes a second conveyor selectively operable to clutch the bottom surface of exposed products and advance the products to define a second shingled stream. A third conveyor receives the second shingled stream from the second conveyor and transfers it to a process device. The third conveyor has an operating speed that is variable and that is selectively different than the operating speed of the second conveyor.